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## DISCUSSION

BUSINESS HIGH SCHOOL

Washington, D. C., August 27, 1907

*Editor of School Review, Chicago, Ill.:*

DEAR SIR: I read the symposium on the study of Latin in your last issue with the greatest interest. As a teacher myself, and as a student of educational history for some years, I am prompted to drop you these few lines.

In the first place, as you know, the same conservatism has always been aroused whenever the slightest change has been proposed in the educational curriculum, especially when it comes to dropping out any branch. Two subjects now come to my mind, Hebrew and disputation. If you will go back into colonial history you will find some heartrending wails at the decline of interest among the students in Hebrew. Wigglesworth of the Harvard staff noted it time and again, almost with "tears in his voice" as Mr. Reed used to say. President Stiles of Yale poured forth the same lamentations as he witnessed the final gasps of disputation which was the biggest thing in mediaeval universities.

In the second place we have something more to go upon than mere deductions, no matter how logical and strong they may be. We have the most convincing of all arguments in this world—we have experience. There is a higher institution among us a century old, classing among its graduates leaders in law, in medicine, in science, in education, in business, in the ministry, in fact in all of the theaters of man's activity—and yet Latin has never been a required study there. Of course it is hardly necessary to state I refer to West Point. Annapolis would be another illustration with its U. S. Naval Academy.

Education is nothing but preparation in early life for the duties and demands of later life. If a certain discipline turns out men who are fully up to the average of their fellows in all roads of competition can we draw but one fair conclusion, especially after this success has been maintained for two or three generations? What can we say except that the training given there has been good? Now if that is done without Latin, how can we hold that Latin is indispensable for anybody, either there or elsewhere, of course barring a few technical exceptions?

I may say that I am a graduate of the classical course, having devoted years of my life to the thumbing of Latin and Greek texts and dictionaries, and having a diploma from John Hopkins University both A. B. and Ph. D. I may say further that I have still retained my knowledge of that Roman speech. I do not mean to parade my little education but simply to show that it is not a question of "sour grapes" with me when I urge some reasons for the dropping of Latin.

Yours very truly,  
COLYER MERIWETHER